

NSC BRIEFING

22 April 1959

CURRENT IRAQI DEVELOPMENTS

- I. The government's campaign to rid Iraq of Western "imperialist" influences is moving forward rapidly.
 - A. British are in process of evacuating Habbaniya airbase. All dependents now gone.
 - B. Western-owned Iraq Petroleum Company has been subjected to considerable harassment, which may develop into "piece-meal" nationalization of the company.
 1. First contingent of Soviet technicians has arrived at the small government-owned, but American operated, Daura refinery, and government is continuing its effective measures to squeeze Western technicians out of Iraq.
 - C.

Western aid

technicians being expelled or under pressure to leave.

Since July revolution, American USOM personnel reduced from 88 to 28.
 - D. Hobs of Iraqi workers besieged the managers of three Western-owned and operated construction companies in Basra last week, using threat of lynching to obtain unjustified pay advances. Iraqi army denied protection unless managers met workers' demands.

- E. New Communist-organized anti-Western demonstrations are being planned for this Friday, ostensibly to celebrate "Bandung day" and the "struggle against imperialism." Youth, labor, women's and other groups are to take part in what amounts to a continuing "show" of Communist strength.
- F. American Embassy officials being subjected to new "security controls" and recurrent surveillance; several Iraqis employed by embassy have been arrested and on 14 April an American education technician working in the US aid mission arrested and subsequently expelled from the country, apparently on charge that he was a "spy and saboteur."

II. In 14 April speech to Baghdad rally of Communist-front Peace Partisans, which included delegations from practically all the bloc countries, Qasim aligned himself with the "democratic forces" representing the "main trend" in the country. He warned against "dissident and reactionary" elements, echoing his earlier warning to Baghdad army groups on the danger stemming from "poisons of division" among military personnel.

- A. Iraqi Communists last week embarked formally on drive to extend their influence to rural areas, with meeting of "founding committee for general union of peasant societies," which Qasim addressed with an appeal for an end to "old rancors and feuds."
 - 1. Meeting's resolutions combined purely rural demands with standard Communist line.
- B. Minister of Health, a pro-Communist, has stated that USSR, rather than Western Europe, will henceforth be locale for special medical treatment for Iraqis, and that private hospitals and clinics in Iraq will be nationalized.

1. An American mission hospital of the Dutch Reformed Church, at Amara, already taken over.

III. Shake-up may be in process in Iraqi cabinet to increase the proportion of Communist representation.

- A. Until now most cabinet posts held by non-Communists--generally adherents of National Democratic (socialist) party.
- B. Now, however, anti-Communist Minister of Guidance has been transferred to an ambassadorial post, replacement of several other ministers is reported likely and five new specialized economic ministries are being created.
- C. Strong rumors in Baghdad that Communists are to get some of these positions. In addition, new purges of anti-Communists are reported this week in Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Social Affairs.

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IV. The UAR is maintaining pressure on Qasim's regime through direct propaganda attacks, through the "Voice of Free Iraq" which it set up on Egyptian territory in early April, through attempts to subvert Iraqi nationalists abroad, and through its withdrawal of UAR technicians and teachers.

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B. Iraqi security patrols have also been involved in minor brushes with dissident tribal elements near the Iranian border.

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V. Some Kurds--over 800--have been repatriated to Iraq from the USSR. UAR propaganda claims these are to form a "foreign legion," but there no real evidence to support this. Kurds, abetted by Soviet agents, are of course a potential pressure group which could act in Soviet interest

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VI. Turkish leaders now appear less sanguine of Qasim's ability to keep out of Communist clutches and are correspondingly more concerned.

VII. Meanwhile, USSR continues to seek to minimize differences with Nasir, and continues to supply UAR with arms.

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C. USSR has already provided UAR with 2 destroyers, 9 submarines, 6 minesweepers, and 37 motor torpedo boats.

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